

# Milestone's Jan. 4 auction of Dr. Jim Reynolds Buddy 'L' toy collection features rare factory samples and prototypes

*450-lot auction lineup represents one of the most complete assemblages of early Buddy 'L' trucks ever to come to market, includes Insurance Patrol truck sample*

WILLOUGHBY, OH, UNITED STATES,  
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EINPresswire.com/ -- On Saturday, January 4, 2025, Milestone Auctions in suburban Cleveland will offer collectors the opportunity to bid on treasures from the renowned [pressed-steel toy collection](#) of the late Dr James R

Reynolds (1943-2020). An esteemed heart surgeon, hobby farmer, philanthropist and South Dakota Hall of Fame inductee, Dr Reynolds lived life to the fullest, with a long and varied list of interests that included hunting, fishing, sailing, NASCAR, spending time

in the field with his dogs, and traveling the world. But a visit to his spacious country home left no doubt as to which hobby consumed the majority of his free time. He loved acquiring and displaying vintage pressed-steel toys, especially Buddy 'L's, and had an extensive network of dealers and fellow collectors from whom he purchased rare, immaculate examples.

The decades Dr Reynolds spent in pursuit of toys took him to groundbreaking toy shows and auctions during the late 1980s and '90s, and later, to the most famous of all pressed-steel specialty events: the March 2001 Buddy 'L' Morgue Auction of factory prototypes and samples. Dr Reynolds' prized purchases from that sale and many other sources are included in the 450 lots to be sold on January 4.

The Reynolds trove is anchored by one of the most complete assemblages of early Buddy 'L' trucks ever to come to market, including doored trucks, Buddy 'L' Jrs, flivvers, ride-on trucks, and



Only known example of Buddy 'L' Insurance Patrol with headlights and bumper. Retains factory prototype tag reading '205C 1928 9LBS.' All original, 27in, with NM paint and decals, and pullcord.  
Estimate: \$10,000-\$20,000

wood prototypes that the famed Illinois toymaker produced during the World War II era when metal was scarce.

Leading the selection is the only known example of a Buddy 'L' Insurance Patrol fitted with headlights and a bumper, complete with factory prototype tag reading 205C 1928 9LBS. All original with its original pullcord and NM paint and decals, this model never saw production. The 27-inch-long truck comes with its original box and distinctive Buddy 'L' blue-and-white striped wrapping paper. It was the top-selling toy at the March 9-11, 2001 Buddy 'L' Morgue auction, which exclusively featured the collection of former Buddy 'L' owner/president Richard Keats (1927-2024). At that event, Dr Reynolds paid \$40,700 to take home the now-legendary one-off toy. Its estimate in the January 4 auction is \$10,000-\$20,000.



Rare version of Buddy 'L' Red Baby truck with round floor decal, Buddy 'L' decal on radiator, and no International Harvester decals, signifying an early model. 24in long Estimate: \$4,000-\$6,000

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The Insurance Patrol truck is a unique prototype that Dr Reynolds acquired at the famous 2001 auction of Buddy L factory morgue toys owned by the company's owner and president, Richard Keats.”

*Miles King, Co-owner of  
Milestone Auctions*

\$6,000.

Another coveted 'Morgue' toy is an outstanding all-original 1938 Buddy 'L' International Shell Truck with its original pull handle and factory box. It is one of the very best examples known and will be offered with a \$3,000-\$5,000 estimate.

A rare version of a Buddy 'L' Red Baby truck has a round floor decal and Buddy 'L' decal on its radiator, but no International Harvester decals. This point is significant because it confirms the auction example to be one of the earliest Red Baby trucks, produced before such toys were retailed at International Harvester dealerships with added IH-logo decals. Measuring 24 inches long, this hefty production could command a winning bid of \$4,000-

The collection also contains the only known original Buddy 'L' [Open Cab Red Baby](#). With very nice original paint and displaying correct International Harvester McCormick Deering decals, its extreme rarity is confirmed by Milestone's cast iron experts who say it is the only toy of its type

that they have seen in 40 years of active involvement in their area of specialty. Graded Excellent, it is estimated at \$4,000-\$6,000.

A rare Buddy 'L' [Baggage Truck](#) with opening doors, dual rubber tires, headlights and bumper sports attractive paint and decals. Measuring 27 inches in length, it was part of the Harold Williams collection prior to acquisition by Dr Reynolds. Estimate: \$3,000-\$4,000. Very hard to find in any condition, a 26-inch-long Buddy 'L' Tank Line Street Sprinkler Truck with rubber tires, headlights and bumper still has its original pumper mechanism. In Excellent condition, it will cross the auction block with a \$2,500-\$3,500 estimate.

A wonderful all-original Buddy 'L' International Sit-N-Ride Stake Truck with NM paint and decals retains its original pull handle and seat, and is accompanied by its original box. More than 2ft long, this desirable toy was purchased by Dr Reynolds at the Buddy 'L' Morgue auction. Estimate: \$1,500-\$2,500

Likely to be a bidder favorite on auction day, an all-original 23-inch-long wood Buddy 'L' #484 "Big Show Circus Wagon with Animals" shows off bright colors and has all of its original animal figures. It is emblazoned The Big Top on Wheels on its sides, is in excellent condition and comes with its original box. Estimate: \$1,000-\$2,000

Three more toys in all-original condition are worthy of special note: an exceptionally fine 28-inch American National Packard Fire Chief Car with its original convertible top, outstanding paint and decals, \$4,000-\$5,000; a scarce and super-clean 26-inch Kelmet "Big Boy" Tank Truck with excellent paint and decals, \$1,500-\$2,000; and a seldom-encountered 26-inch Sturditoy US Mail Truck, also with excellent paint and decals, and with both back doors intact, estimate: \$1,500-\$2,500.



Outstanding all-original 1938 Buddy 'L' International Shell Truck with original pull handle and box. One of the best of all known examples. Estimate: \$3,000-\$5,000



All-original American National Packard Fire Chief Car with outstanding paint and decals. Retains original convertible top. Exceptionally fine example of a rare toy. Length: 28in. Estimate: \$4,000-\$5,000

A special highlight within the is the 481-lot offering is a subcollection of 40-50 large-scale sculptural vehicles created by Brian Cowdery of Cowdery Toy Works, Hot Springs, Arkansas. Very highly regarded by toy collectors, Cowdery's pricey pressed-steel designs were initially offered in limited editions and are no longer in production. One of Dr Reynolds' favorites, a Flivver House Car (1920s-'30s terminology for "motorhome"), was a one-of-a-kind special-commission piece and is marked Prototype Reynolds. The boat affixed to the House Car's roof is custom-marked Sioux Falls, South Dakota, reflecting Reynolds' city of residence. Near-mint and 23 inches long, it is estimated at \$1,000-\$2,000.



All-original example of an elusive Kelmet 'Big Boy' Tank Truck. Super-clean with excellent paint, decals intact. Length: 26in. Estimate: \$1,500-\$2,000

The Jan. 4, 2025 auction of the Dr. James R. Reynolds collection of pressed-steel toys with prototypes and samples from the Buddy 'L' factory morgue will be held at Milestone's gallery located at 38198 Willoughby Pkwy., Willoughby, OH 44094. Start time: 10am ET. Ample free parking. In addition to live bidding at the gallery, Milestone welcomes all other forms of remote bidding: absentee, phone or live online through Milestone Live, LiveAuctioneers or Invaluable. Worldwide shipping available. For additional information about any toy in the auction, to reserve a phone line for bidding, or to discuss consigning to a future Milestone auction, call Miles King at 440-527-8060 or email [info@milestoneauctions.com](mailto:info@milestoneauctions.com). Online: [www.milestoneauctions.com](http://www.milestoneauctions.com)

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